Wartime Harvests from Farm Woodlands

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Soil Conservation Service
Forest Service • Extension Service

EVERY PIECE of wood a farmer harvests from his woodland contributes to the war effort. The quantity from any one farm may appear insignificant, but the total quantity is of major importance in winning the war.

A load of firewood means that much more coal for the steel furnaces. A cord of pulpwood means parachutes, guncotton, waterproof containers. A black walnut log means gunstocks can be made for firearms. A veneer log means propellers or wings for an airplane.

A sawlog means lumber for more poultry or livestock houses or granaries on the farm or for crates to ship food or munitions to the fighting front.

Nearly 20 percent of all farms, including the vast stretch of nearly treeless Plains, is woodland. The prosperity of our farms depends partly on how we treat the woodland. If well managed, it can—and should—become one of the most profitable parts of the farm enterprise.

Even more important, today, the Nation needs wood products of all kinds with which to fight its enemies. The farmers are again called upon to produce more wood within the framework of conservation farming. That means woodland management, not woodland destruction.

This pamphlet provides a simple guide to farmers in the production of wood products for war, on the basis of good farm-woodland management, which means cutting the wood and keeping the woods—cutting the products and keeping the growing stock.

All this is part of conservation farming—a more productive, common-sense type of farming now being practiced by farmers. It simply means applying just as good management to the woodland as is applied to other cropland. How farmers manage and harvest their woodland resources is today a matter of paramount importance.

The nation needs the forest products that can be produced from farm woodlands

The war needs for forest products of all kinds are exceeding our capacity to produce them—largely because of a lack of manpower. The Nation needs the help of every farmer who can produce logs, poles, posts, fuel, railroad ties, charcoal, chemical wood, pulpwood—any product to which the woods and local market are adapted.

Wood has been listed with aluminum, copper, steel, as an essential war material.

Our needs for lumber

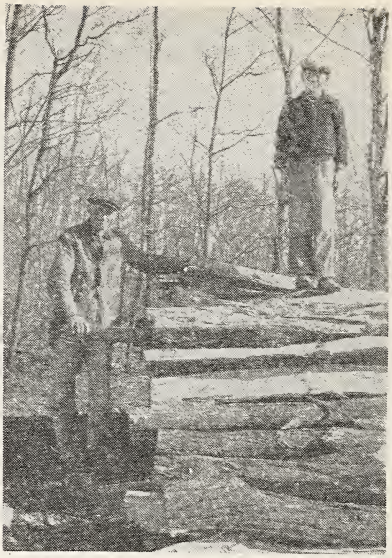
Production in 1943 failed to meet consumption by 4 billion feet. Many local sawmills manage to cut 1,000,000 feet of rough lumber in a year. It will take a year's work by 4,000 such mills to make up this deficit.

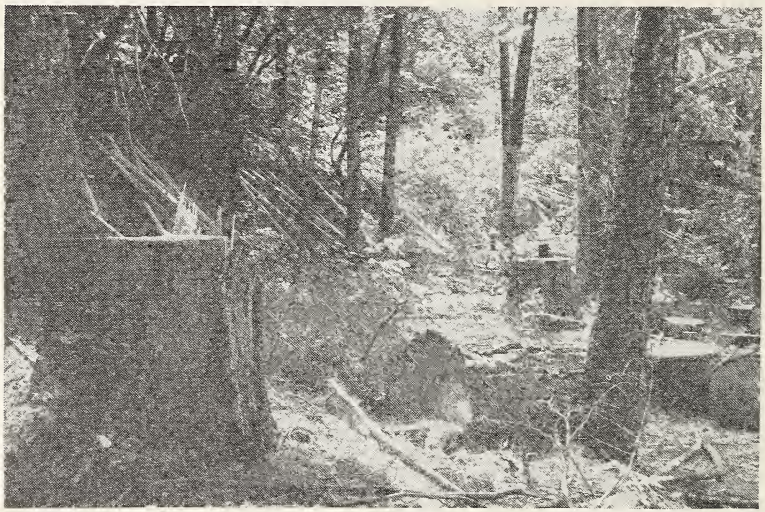
Our needs for pulpwood

Domestic pulpwood production in 1943 is expected to fall short of requirements by at least 2 million cords.

Our needs for fuel wood

Looks now like a shortage of 10 million cords in 1943. Some people may suffer for lack of fuel this winter. Prewar consumption was about 75 million cords. The requirements for 1943–44, due to shortages of oil, coal, and transportation, are estimated at 67 million cords. The situation is particularly acute in the Northern States and in the Pacific Northwest.





Our needs for other forest products

Veneer logs to be worked into plywood, make parts for aircraft and boats such as propellers, wing coverings, fuselage, gun turrets; they are scarce. High-grade logs of both hardwood and softwood are needed. The railroads need lumber, piling and ties; the mines need mine timbers of all kinds; boxes, tool handles and cooperage stock are wanted. We need charcoal in the metal and chemical industries—in the manufacture of rayon for tire cords and parachutes, gas masks and

numerous other purposes. Charcoal is made from both hardwoods and softwoods. A serious shortage of any of these forest products may disrupt the war program.

Labor, to get out wood products, is the real bottleneck. Farmers will help most if somehow they and their neighbors manage, without using other than regular farm labor, to produce the logs, bolts, lumber, cords, alongside the road or delivered at the mill. Not a bad idea either to see what benefits a little labor, intelligently applied every winter to the development of the woods, will produce. A Virginia farmer put it this way:

> I think my biggest job at this time is the production of food; but I realize my obligation to utilize every hour of my time and my help's time toward furthering the war effort. My woodlands aid in this complete utilization of labor and also allow for processing products needed in the war effort by providing a place to work when the weather won't allow us to perform other farm duties.

Another farmer said:

> It is surprising how much you can accomplish in your woodland in just a few hours when you know what you want to do—pays well too.

The Nation needs the productive power of managed farm woodlands

They now produce about one-third of all the products produced in American forests.

Two-thirds of the current output from farm woodlands are in low-grade (and low-valued) products such as fuel wood, fence posts, ties, and pulpwood.

Total forest products.

One-third from farm woodlands

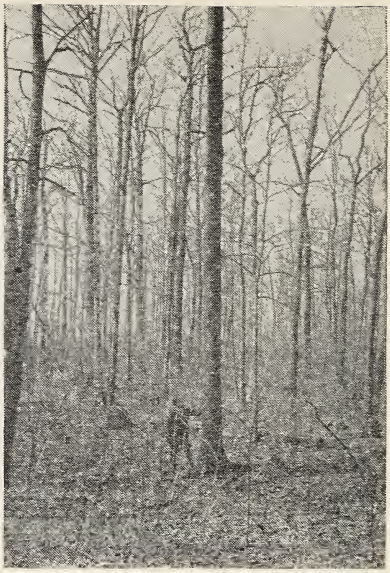
Total farm-woodland products

Two-thirds are low-grade products

Good management—

not only can increase volume output but it can reverse the proportions of low- and high-grade products; two-thirds of the total output could be in high-grade products, such as sawlogs, veneer logs, poles, piling, specialty products, one-third in fuel, posts, pulpwood, ties.

A well-managed farm woodland with a good growing stock of trees can safely produce three times as much as the average untended woods. Farm woodland owners of the United States have a potential, but so far unclaimed, annual revenue, based on normal times, of 500 million dollars to be realized through woodland management.



Cut now

Study the needs of your woods and your farm and remove the products that you can best spare. The war needs encompass the whole range of forest products. It is for you to choose what to cut and sell.

Thin the dense stands

Leave selected crop trees evenly spaced, and give the crowns (tops) of the crop trees room to grow by removing the remaining merchantable trees for fuel, pulpwood, posts, ties, chemical wood, and charcoal. The crop trees are those which give the most promise of developing into sawlogs, poles, and piling.

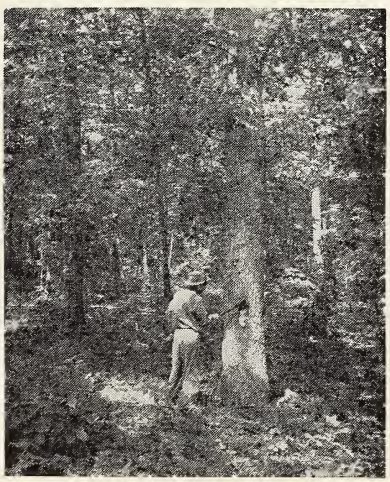
Make an improvement cutting

This is usually the first cutting in a conscious effort to develop the growing stock. Culls and cripples are taken out, and generally the cutting is aimed at renovating the stand. The best trees are given sufficient space so that they get the benefit of sunlight, air, and moisture that are required for satisfactory growth. The products may be the same as from thinnings, but they may include a few sawlogs, poles, and better grades of railroad ties, pulpwood, or mine timbers. In addition, you should harvest some of your mature trees in order to furnish high-grade products for the war.

Cut part of your mature trees

Select what you think should come out now, considering the war needs and the condition of your woods.

A rough guide in harvesting crop trees is to mark for cutting about 20 percent of the volume in trees 10 inches or more in diameter. Normally this should permit another cut of about the same volume in 4 to 7 years. If you cut as much as 35 percent, the interval between crop-tree harvests will be twice as long.



DEVELOP,

do not spoil, your growing stock

Other wood needs and markets will come next year and after the war is over. The Nation needs forest products but it also needs prosperous farms; the farm woodland is an important factor in making a prosperous farm.

If it is impossible, with the time and facilities available on the farm, to cut and remove the forest products, the next best procedure is to sell stumpage—that is, standing trees previously selected and marked. A contract should almost always be signed specifying such essential things as the following: What trees are sold, price to be paid, unit of measurement, when and how payment is to be made, time limit, responsibilities of buyer for slash disposal and for injury to trees left standing, definition of a minimum merchantable tree or log that is to be taken, height of stump, and limit of top utilization. Usually it is better to sell on the basis of a scale of logs, counting of pieces, or measurement of piles, before the products are removed from the woods.

IT IS RARELY WISE TO SELL FOR A LUMP-SUM PRICE.

For further information, see your county agent or nearest publicly employed forester.

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